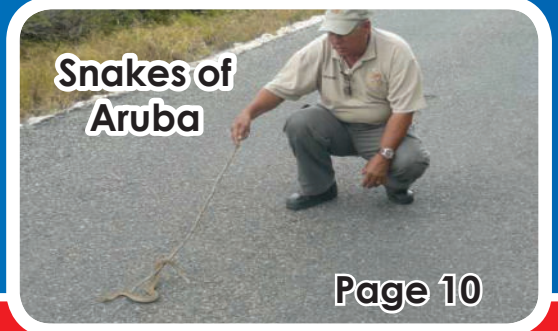




Aruba's ONLY English Vacation Newspaper

Aruba: the legend behind its name



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From commerce to community: America's oldest mall reborn as affordable housing hub



PROVIDENCE, RI — In the heart of downtown Providence, a towering Greek Revival facade that once stood as the pinnacle of 19th-century consumerism is now serving a much more vital 21st-century purpose. The Westminster Arcade, recognized as the oldest indoor shopping mall in the United States, has completed its total transformation from a struggling retail center into a thriving community of affordable micro-lofts, providing a revolutionary blueprint for addressing the nation's housing crisis.

Built in 1828, the Arcade has survived nearly two centuries of economic shifts, but the rise of e-commerce and the decline of traditional retail threatened to leave the historic landmark vacant. Today, however, the halls that once echoed with the footsteps of Victorian-era shoppers are filled with the energy of young professionals, students, and service workers who have found a rare prize in the modern real estate market: a high-quality, dignified home for just \$550 a month. The project, spearheaded by visionary developers and local preservationists, is a masterclass in "adaptive

reuse." Rather than tearing down the granite columns and glass-paned gables to make way for a modern high-rise, the design team chose to work within the building's historic footprint. The result is 48 micro-lofts ranging from 225 to 450 square feet. Each unit is expertly designed with built-in furniture, full bathrooms, and compact kitchens, proving that "small living" does not have to mean "lesser living."

"This isn't just about putting a roof over someone's head," said the project's lead architect. "It's about preserving our architectural heritage while solving the most pressing social issue of our time. We are proving that historic buildings can be part of the future, not just relics of the past."

The transformation has been hailed as a win-win for the city. By focusing on affordability, the development has brought a diverse population back to the downtown core, stimulating the local economy. The ground floor of the Arcade remains open to the public, featuring a curated selection of local boutiques, bookstores, and small coffee shops. This "live-work" model ensures that the build-

ing remains a vibrant community hub rather than a gated residential complex. Residents like Marcus Thorne, a local graphic designer who moved in last month, say the change has been life-altering. "Finding an apartment for under \$1,200 in this city was becoming impossible," Thorne said. "Living here, I'm right in the middle of everything. I don't need a car, my utilities are manageable, and I'm living inside a piece of history. It feels like the city actually wants people like me to stay here."

The success in Providence is already catching the attention of urban planners across the country. As traditional malls in suburban and urban areas face record vacancy rates, the "Arcade Model" offers a path forward. By converting these existing structures into residential spaces, cities can reduce the environmental impact of new construction, preserve local history, and rapidly increase the supply of housing.

Legislators are also taking note. The project was made possible through a combination of historic tax credits and zoning variances that allowed for smaller-than-average unit sizes. State officials are now looking to streamline these processes to encourage more developers to take on similar "adaptive reuse" challenges. As Providence celebrates this milestone, the Arcade stands as a beacon of hope. It is a reminder that with a bit of creativity and a commitment to the common good, the relics of our past can be repurposed to build a more inclusive and sustainable future for all Americans. □

U.S. labor secretary leaving Trump administration: White House



Washington, United States

U.S. Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer is to leave her job, the White House said Monday, departing after a tenure beset by a series of scandals including complaints over the treatment of young female staffers. Her exit caps weeks of speculation about her future and follows the ousting of Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Attorney General Pam Bondi, within days of each other, as Trump's cabinet has become a revolving door for women in recent weeks. "Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer will be leaving the Administration to take a position in the private sector," communications director Steven Cheung announced on X, praising the "phenomenal job" she had done in the role.

The former congresswoman was supported by more than a dozen Democrats in her confirmation but had recently been facing calls to resign over accusations that she, her aides and members of her family were routinely sending personal messages and requests to young staff members.

The New York Times reported last week that she and a former deputy chief of staff sent texts asking employees to bring wine to them during trips for the department. Chavez-DeRemer's husband and father both also exchanged text messages with young female staff members, some of whom had been instructed by the labor secretary to "pay attention" to the men, the Times reported.

The messages were gathered as part of a probe of Chavez-DeRemer's leadership, launched in response to a complaint of widespread misconduct that revealed concerns among staff who described her as disconnected from the work of the department.

Four people have been forced out of her team as a result of the investigation, the Times reported, including her former chief of staff and deputy chief of staff, director of advance and a member of her security detail with whom she was accused of having an affair.

Three staff members have filed civil rights complaints describing a hostile work environment, the Times reported. □

Rooted in greatness: Arbor Day Foundation surpasses 500 million trees planted

The Arbor Day Foundation, a non-profit organization that has become synonymous with environmental stewardship in the United States, officially announced today that it has surpassed the monumental milestone of planting and distributing more than 500 million trees since its inception. This achievement marks a half-century of grassroots mobilization, corporate partnerships, and a relentless commitment to the belief that trees are a fundamental solution to many of the world's most pressing challenges. From the restoration of fire-ravaged forests in the American West to the cooling of "urban heat islands" in inner cities, the foundation's impact has reached every corner of the nation and beyond.

The journey to half a billion trees began in 1972, the centennial of the first Arbor Day. Founded in Lincoln, Nebraska, the organization sought to transform a regional holiday into a national movement.

What started as a modest effort to encourage individuals to plant saplings in their backyards has evolved into a sophisticated global network. Today, the foundation operates through a diverse array of programs,



including Community Tree Recovery, Tree City USA, and massive reforestation projects in critical ecosystems. This latest milestone is not just a celebration of a number, but a testament to the cumulative power of small, individual actions combined with large-scale strategic planning.

A significant driver of this recent success has been the foundation's ability to forge powerful alliances with the private sector. One of the primary partners in reaching the 500-million mark has been Procter & Gamble's Charmin brand. Through

their "Protect, Grow and Restore" initiative, the partnership has focused on planting trees in areas of greatest need, such as those affected by natural disasters or invasive species. These corporate collaborations have provided the necessary capital to scale operations rapidly, moving the needle from millions of trees per year to tens of millions. However, the Arbor Day Foundation emphasizes that their work is about much more than just putting roots in the dirt. "It is not just about the quantity of trees, but the quality of the impact they have on people's lives," a

spokesperson for the foundation stated during today's announcement. In urban environments, trees are a critical tool for social equity. Studies have shown that low-income neighborhoods often have significantly less canopy cover than wealthier areas, leading to higher temperatures and poorer air quality. By focusing on "Tree Equity," the foundation is working to ensure that the health benefits of nature—such as reduced respiratory issues and lower stress levels—are available to everyone, regardless of their zip code.

The environmental benefits of 500 million trees are staggering. Collectively, these trees have sequestered millions of tons of carbon dioxide, filtered billions of gallons of water, and provided essential habitats for countless species of wildlife. In the wake of increasingly severe wildfires in states like California and Oregon, the foundation's reforestation efforts have been a literal lifeline for ecosystems that might otherwise have transitioned into permanent shrubland. By planting climate-resilient species, they are ensuring that the forests of tomorrow are equipped to handle a changing world.

The milestone also coincides with National Volunteer Week, a fitting backdrop for an organization that relies so heavily on community participation. Across the United States today, thousands of volunteers are participating in local planting events to kick off the next chapter of the foundation's mission. From elementary school students learning about photosynthesis for the first time to retirees dedicated to leaving a green legacy, the "Roots of Hope" campaign has fostered a sense of agency in a time when many feel overwhelmed by environmental news. □

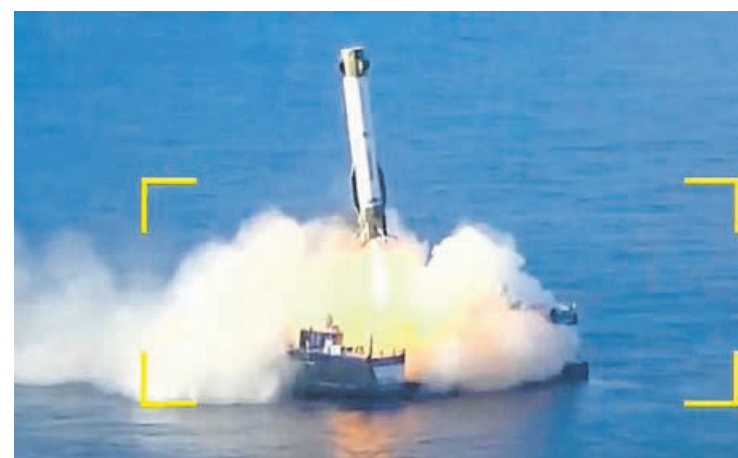
Blue Origin probing rocket's failure to deliver satellite

Washington, United States
The Federal Aviation Administration said Monday it is requiring Blue Origin to conduct a "mishap investigation" after the space company's New Glenn rocket failed to deliver a communications satellite into the correct orbit. On Sunday, the space company owned by Jeff Bezos successfully reused and recovered a booster for its New Glenn rocket, but the uncrewed mission did not deliver the satellite from the company AST SpaceMobile. The FAA said in a statement to AFP that "a return to flight of the New Glenn vehicle is based on the FAA determining that any system, process,

or procedure related to the mishap does not affect public safety," adding that Blue Origin would lead the probe with FAA oversight. Blue Origin CEO Dave Limp said in a statement posted to social media that "early data suggest that on our second GS2 burn, one of the BE-3U engines didn't produce sufficient thrust to reach our target orbit."

"While we are pleased with the nominal booster recovery, we clearly didn't deliver the mission our customer wanted, and our team expects," Limp said, adding that the company aims to "implement the improve-

ments needed to quickly return to flight operations." The New Glenn rocket, standing at 98 meters (321 feet) tall, lifted off from Florida's Cape Canaveral with its reused booster at about 7:25 am (1125 GMT) on Sunday carrying the satellite. After liftoff, the rocket's two stages separated, with the upper stage continuing its journey carrying the satellite into space. Its booster successfully landed on a floating platform in the Atlantic Ocean about nine minutes and 30 seconds after takeoff. But the communications satellite was placed in a lower orbit than planned. AST SpaceMobile, which is



This screen grab taken from a Blue Origin broadcast shows the booster of Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket landing on a floating platform in the Atlantic Ocean on April 19, 2026.

working to develop a space-based cellular broadband network, said in a statement that "the altitude is too low to sustain operations." "The cost of the satellite is expected to be recovered under the company's insurance policy," it said.

The New Glenn rocket is at the heart of Bezos's space ambitions as he competes with SpaceX, the rival company owned by fellow billionaire Elon Musk. Both companies are working to develop lunar landers for NASA's Artemis program. □

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Who's Bad? Not Michael Jackson in new big-budget biopic

Paris, France

A new Michael Jackson biopic will shortly arrive in cinemas telling the story of the King of Pop's early career, but it's a tightly controlled story that avoids any reference to the child sex abuse allegations that dogged his later life.

Titled "Michael" and beset by production and legal problems, it spans his childhood in Gary, Indiana, and climaxes with the moon-walking megastar performing in London during his Bad World Tour.

Distributors Lionsgate are hoping for global revenues of \$700 million from a production budget of \$200 million, which would push it close to the \$910 million earned by "Bohemian Rhapsody" in 2018 a record for a musical biopic. Made by the same producer as the Queen biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody", Graham King, it features Jackson's nephew Jaafar Jackson in the main role, a 29-year-old with no previous acting experience.

"They threw me right in the deep end," Jaafar told US talkshow host Jimmy Fallon



Colman Domingo and Jaafar Jackson attend the 51st AFI Lifetime Achievement Award: A Tribute Celebrating Eddie Murphy at Dolby Theatre on April 18, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

earlier this month, adding that he had been helped with the dancing by his uncle's real-life choreographers.

"It was really a surreal, spiritual moment," he said of playing one of the most recognisable characters in pop music.

- 'Controlled narrative' -

Jaafar Jackson delivers a strong performance as the

gloved and thrusting singer, while the concert scenes are sure to delight fans of the "Thriller" and "Bad" albums.

At the Berlin premiere on April 10, Jackson's sons Prince and Bigi were joined on the red carpet with his brother Jermaine Jaafar's father.

All the surviving Jackson siblings are credited as executive producers,

meaning they all had a right to review the film before its global release from Wednesday.

But the involvement of the family has led to accusations that the film sugar-coats the image of a man who was dogged by sexual abuse allegations before his death by overdose in 2009, aged 50.

His daughter Paris, who had

no involvement, has been one of the most outspoken critics.

"A big section of the film panders to a very specific section of my dad's fandom that still lives in the fantasy, and they're gonna be happy with it," the actress and singer wrote on Instagram last September.

"The narrative is being controlled and there's a lot of inaccuracy and there's a lot of just full-blown lies."

- 'Human story' -

A third of the original film exploring allegations against the star had to be cut and re-shot.

Lawyers for the Jackson estate realised there was a clause in a settlement with one of the singer's accusers, Jordan Chandler, that barred any mention of him in a film, Variety film magazine reported.

Although Jackson was never convicted in criminal or civil court, other alleged victims filed lawsuits after his death, several of which are still active.

The film was originally scheduled for release in April 18, 2025 before being pushed back by a year. □

Lana Del Rey takes on Bond with new game title track



U.S. singer-songwriter Lana Del Rey arrives for the Ralph Lauren Collection Fall 2026 runway show in New York City on February 10, 2026.

Paris, France

Lana Del Rey has joined an exclusive club of pop greats by voicing a new theme song for James Bond -- albeit for the fictional British superspy's video game incarnation in the upcoming "007: First Light". "I was so excited to work with Lana, an artist who brought elegance, atmosphere and her totally unique character to this piece," co-composer David Arnold, who also scored a string of Bond movies in the late 90s and 2000s, said in a statement. Published to streaming platforms Thursday, Del Rey's track "First Light" sticks to a familiar formula of haunting lyrics and brassy hooks evoking the musical history of the Bond series.

Music has been a key facet of the fran-

chise since its first film, 1962's "Dr. No", with the world-famous theme song composed by Monty Norman used in every movie since.

Later films' themes have been performed by stars like Shirley Bassey, Paul McCartney, Madonna, Adele and Billie Eilish. Built by "Hitman" developers IO Interactive for PC, Playstation 5 and Xbox Series, "First Light" will place players into the shoes of a young James Bond earning his "licence to kill".

It is the first James Bond game in over a decade and one of the year's most anticipated titles especially after a two-month delay to publication for what IO said was final polishing. □

Nations gather for first-ever conference on fossil fuel exit

Paris, France

More than 50 nations are attending a world-first conference on phasing out fossil fuels in Colombia next week as the Iran war underscores how dependent countries remain on planet-heating coal, oil and gas. Ministers arrive in the Caribbean city of Santa Marta against a backdrop of wartime fuel shortages, soaring prices and a scramble for energy security in what the International Energy Agency has called the biggest oil supply shock ever.

The gathering was born out of frustration with consensus-based United Nations climate talks, where efforts to negotiate a fossil fuel exit strategy have stalled.

But organizers say the energy shock caused by Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, the key transit point for Gulf oil and gas shipments, has strengthened the case for a fossil fuel phaseout, even as some countries look to coal in the short-term to secure supplies.

Concerns over energy security are expected to shape the high-level discussions over April 28 and 29 as much as climate priorities, analysts say.

The meeting was announced months ago but has taken on "greater relevance" with the energy crisis, said Colombia's environment minister Irene



Aerial view of the solar park in Zona Bananera, Prado Sevilla, Magdalena department, Colombia on April 17, 2026.

Velez Torres, whose country is co-hosting with the Netherlands.

Major fossil fuel producing nations Australia, Canada and Norway are expected along with developing oil giants Angola, Mexico and Brazil and coal-reliant emerging markets Turkey and Vietnam.

They will join dozens of other countries from small-island developing states to major economies Germany, France and the UK. However the world's biggest coal, oil and gas producers notably the United States, China, Saudi Arabia and Russia are skipping the event.

- 'Honest space' -

It will be closely watched for political signals from an emerging coalition of fossil fuel producers and consumers pushing for a phase-out outside the UN process. Colombia -- a coal and oil exporter -- said the "strategically important" participating countries accounted for one-fifth of global fossil fuel production and nearly one-third of consumption.

Fossil fuel interests have been accused of influencing UN negotiations on climate change and some governments and activists have questioned the involvement of producer nations in Santa Marta.

"The larger the group of countries, the more diffused the interests are and the less chance you've got of getting a sharp outcome," climate scientist Bill Hare, founder of Climate Analytics think tank, told AFP.

Velez Torres said, however, it was a "major step forward" to have producer countries present tackling this "taboo".

"We need to start a more honest space where we can discuss this more openly, and bring all cards to the table. Nobody is saying that the way to eliminating fossil fuels is easy. But we need to bring these people together," she said.

For some, the conference's appeal is partly its distance from the UN climate talks.

"I think the Santa Marta meeting is long overdue," Maina Talia, climate minister of low-lying Tuvalu, told reporters.

- Energy bind -

Roughly twice as much investment goes into clean energy as fossil fuels, which are the primary driver of human-caused climate change.

But heat-trapping emissions from burning coal, oil and gas rose again in 2025 to a record high.

In response to the energy crisis, some countries intend to ramp up coal use to plug short-term supply gaps, underlining the challenge of reducing reliance on fossil fuels even in advanced economies.

Vanuatu's Climate Minister Ralph Regenvanu, whose Pacific Island nation is highly reliant on energy imports, told reporters the crisis was "unequivocally a call to lessen dependence on fossil fuels for everyone".

"We're very much looking forward to being first movers in this space," said Regenvanu.

Nearly 200 countries agreed at COP28 in 2023 to transition away from fossil fuels but efforts to turn that pledge into action have faced strong resistance since. □

Turkey 'optimistic' Middle East ceasefire will be extended

Antalya, Turkey

Turkey said on Sunday it remained "optimistic" that a two-week ceasefire between Iran and the United States that expires on Wednesday, would be extended, allowing more time for talks between the sides. Pakistan is leading preparations for more high-level US-Iran peace talks after a first round ended without agreement last weekend, Turkey, alongside Egypt, has expressed strong support for the Pakistan-led initiative on prolonging negotiations and preventing a return to hostilities. "No one wants to see a new war break out when the ceasefire expires next week.

We hope ... the parties will extend the ceasefire," Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said at the closing of a three-day diplomacy forum in the southern Antalya province.

"I hope there'll be an extension. I am optimistic," he said. Fidan said he spoke with Pakistani officials on Sunday but would not give a date when new talks could be held.

"The continuation of negotiations is something the entire international community wants. There is significant pressure in this regard," he said.

"Under this level of pressure, I believe the parties should

not see any obstacle to extending the ceasefire in order to continue peace negotiations," added the minister.

Fidan said unless the sides chose to pursue more confrontational measures, there was "a strong possibility that the ceasefire will be extended and negotiations will continue".

"Hopefully, a more positive scenario will emerge. With some luck, by that time, the key issues in the negotiations may already have been resolved," he added.

Despite the optimism and movement in negotiations, Iran said on Sunday a final peace deal was "far" off.



Iran's deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh gestures as he attends the 5th edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF2026) in Antalya on April 18, 2026.

"It is clear that the negotiations have reached a critical stage. Both sides are continuing the talks with a

genuine sense of sincerity. They also have the will to keep the process going," Fidan said. □

Hit reality show helps rev up Japan's delinquent youth subculture

Tokyo, Japan

Sporting towering Elvis-style hair and a school uniform modified into a rebellious silhouette, 15-year-old Reona worships Japan's classic bad-boy subculture recently taken global by a hit Netflix dating show.

Japan in the heady 1980s teemed with hot-blooded teens who rebelled against society through dangerous motorcycle rides, school "wars" and full-on street brawls.

Their outlandish fashion and supposed traits such as chivalry have since made them Japan's pop-culture darlings, from anime to film, despite its conformist population's disdain for rule-breakers.

The latest to capitalize on the genre is Netflix, whose recent reality show "Badly in Love" spotlighted Japan's "yankii" (delinquent) culture by starring 11 young men and women, including former "bosozoku" (motorcycle gang) members.

And a yankii-themed exhibition is now underway in Tokyo, re-enacting the 80s chaos with flamboyantly modified motorcycles and heavily embroidered "tokkofuku", military-style jackets worn by the bikers.

High-schooler Reona, who AFP has chosen not to name in full because he's a minor, mimics the 80s rebels by donning baggy school trousers designed to create



This picture taken on February 15, 2026 shows visitors (L-R) Ryusei Katsumi, Hitomi Sato, Yuki Yokoyama and Tom Akiike posing at an event that can be translated as the "Great Yankii Exhibition", in Saitama.

an imposing impression.

"I think their hardcore manliness on full display is so cool," he told AFP.

A fighting spirit, loyalty to friends and straightforwardness are redeeming qualities often associated with the subculture.

Modern delinquents, meanwhile, are sometimes derided for their childish TikTok clout-chasing, online bullying and the underhanded way they scam elderly people as part of so-called "black-market part-time gigs".

Prank videos have gone viral in recent years showing

teenage customers committing unhygienic antics at Japan's famed sushi conveyor-belt restaurants so-called "sushi terrorism".

"Getting arrested for riding around your motorcycle may have some honour, but getting arrested for those sushi pranks is plain lame," Reona said.

Hiroataka Sotooka, 43, laughs off his eight-year-old son's precocious penchant for gangster-like attire, but draws a clear line.

The parent is willing to tolerate motorcycles, fistfights and fashion statements, but "I don't want him to bully the weak, be violent

toward women or do anything purely evil", he told AFP.

"Otherwise it's his life to enjoy," he said, proudly watching as his son strikes a perfect tough-guy pose before a bosozoku-style bike showcased at the yankii exhibition during its February iteration.

- 'Embarrassing' -

Japanese teens still do make headlines vrooming recklessly, skirmishing or even dueling, but they are now commonly seen as less belligerent after many moved online to vent.

The number of bosozoku

members, too, plummeted nearly 90 percent to 5,880 in 2024 from their peak in 1982, police data shows.

That is partly because "surveillance cameras are now everywhere" and "everyone films you on an iPhone and leaves proof of your act", Kenichiro Iwahashi, a former outlaw biker turned delinquency expert, told AFP.

With the risk of arrest much higher, bosozoku gangs as hardcore as those in the 80s known for their unlicensed, unhelmeted and tokkofuku-flaunting style are "almost non-existent today", he said.

While long popular in fiction, yankii youths remain deeply frowned upon in real life for their transgressive behaviors and occasional transitions to full-fledged career criminals.

Satoru Saito, who performs as a "yankii comedian" complete with towering quiff, shaved eyebrows and tokkofuku, sometimes finds himself vilified online by those almost allergic to his "anti-social" appearance.

"For some people, this is a hard no," the 33-year-old told AFP.

"Most of these yankii folks are doing things like fighting or committing crimes, and the act of riding motorcycles at midnight can be extremely noisy, so I get why they are hated." □

Experts carry out controlled blast of WWII bomb near Paris



This undated handout photograph made available by the Prefecture de Police on April 19, 2026 shows members of the police Explosive ordnance disposal unit (EOD) operating to neutralise a bomb from World War II partially uncovered near a residential area, in Paris' northwestern suburb of Colombes.

Colombes, France

Bomb disposal experts carried out a controlled underground detonation of a World War II explosive near Paris on Sunday, an AFP journalist reported, after authorities evacuated more than a thousand residents.

Nearly 800 police cordoned off the site in the northwest suburb of Colombes, where the device was first discovered on April 10. An AFP journalist heard the explosion around 3:20 pm (1320 GMT) as experts detonated the bomb in a two-metre-deep (6.5-foot) pit.

Officials also confirmed the operation had been carried out.

The controlled explosion was ordered after specialists had failed in one bid to remove the detonator from the explosive, which measured more than one metre in length, excluding the tail section.

Footage of the operation showed rusted metal fragments at the bottom of a sand pit, reinforced with thick timber planks and concrete walls.

Residents within a 450-metre radius were told early Sunday to move to local reception centres. Authorities expect to allow them back into their homes later in the day. Some local roads were closed to traffic and public transport.

Local official Alexandre Brugere on Thursday had described the operation as "risky" and requiring a "high level of preparation".

Unexploded World War II ordnance is still found across Europe, particularly in Germany where bombs are regularly discovered on construction sites, 80 years after the conflict ended. □

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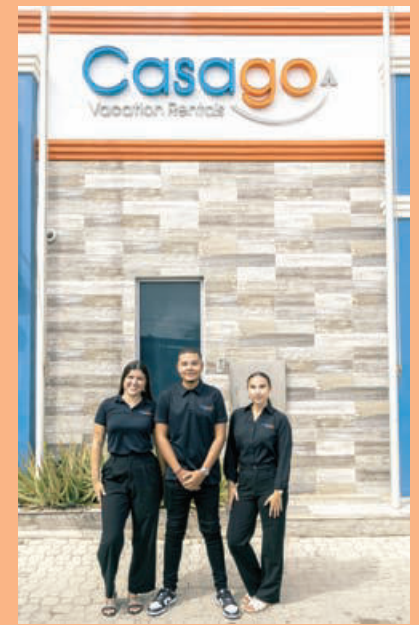
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to the local community and to sustainable practices. The team works closely with local businesses and artisans, promotes eco-conscious travel, and supports initiatives that contribute positively to the island's environment and economy.

As one of the fastest-growing vacation rental and property management companies on the island, Casago Aruba continues to expand its footprint—welcoming more travelers, partnering with more homeowners, and raising the standard of hospitality in Aruba. □

Beautiful areas around Aruba

(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge

Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges



and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why is easy, it's way too dangerous to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due fear of height. To reach this beauty you must go to San Nicolas and drive up the hill till The Point Lighthouse, park your car and walk until you reach the east point coast and go left along the coastline and good luck going down the cliff.

Surfside Beach

This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovat-



ed the whole area it got a new facelift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. □



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Po-Ké Ono Brings Bold Asian Fusion to Aruba's Dining Scene

Innovative eatery blends island culture with modern Asian cuisine



In a culinary landscape known for its diversity and creativity, Po-Ké Ono stands out as a vibrant and contemporary addition to Aruba's restaurant scene. With locations at Azure in Palm Beach and the Renaissance Marketplace in Oranjestad, the concept introduces a refreshing take on Asian fusion dining—casual in style, yet refined in execution.

Established in 2020, Po-Ké Ono was envisioned as a space where flavor, culture, and creativity intersect. The menu features an array of signature dishes including poke bowls, steamed bao, and sushi, crafted with precision and a focus on freshness. Drawing on Asian influences, the restaurant delivers bold flavors in an approachable format, appealing to a broad audience of locals and visitors alike.

The ambiance is designed to be welcoming and relaxed, with a philosophy centered

around accessibility and enjoyment. Whether dining indoors or grabbing a quick bowl on the go, guests can expect a consistently high standard in both service and cuisine. With extensive menu options, including selections for vegan diners, Po-Ké Ono caters to a wide range of tastes and dietary preferences.

While the concept leans into fast-casual dining, the quality of ingredients and thoughtful



preparation reflect fine-dining roots. Many of the restaurant's core ingredients are sourced locally, emphasizing sustainability and support for Aruba's agricultural community. The result is a dining experience that honors both the island's spirit and the culinary traditions it draws inspiration from.

Open daily from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Po-Ké Ono continues to gain recognition as one of the island's premier destinations for sushi, poke, and

bao. Its growing popularity is a testament to Aruba's evolving food culture—one that embraces global influence while staying rooted in community and craft.

For those seeking a modern taste of Asia in the heart of the Caribbean, Po-Ké Ono offers a flavorful and memorable experience worth exploring. □



Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest

natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site re-



mained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge

entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



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Your Next Business Lunch Deserves a Better View Elements Restaurant Introduces its New Executive Lunch



There is a better place to do business in Aruba, and it sits right on Eagle Beach. Elements Restaurant at the award-winning, adults-only Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort has introduced its new Executive Lunch, a three-course dining experience designed for professionals who want a comfortable, private setting for a working lunch that is actually worth looking forward to. Available weekdays from 12:00 to 4:30 p.m. and priced at \$23.50 per person, the Executive Lunch includes a choice of appetizer, main course and dessert, along with a complimentary non-alcoholic beverage.

Recognized as TripAdvisor's No. 1 Fine Dining Restaurant in the Caribbean, Elements sits directly on the widest stretch of Eagle Beach,

offering panoramic ocean views from every seat. The beautifully designed air-conditioned interior features floor-to-ceiling windows that bring the stunning beachfront views inside, while the open-air deck lets in the gentle trade winds and the sound of the sea. The atmosphere is calm, the service is attentive, and the privacy is genuine, exactly the kind of setting that is hard to find elsewhere on the island on a busy weekday. To preserve that atmosphere, the Executive Lunch is suited for smaller meetings, with group reservations accepted for a maximum of six persons.

The Executive Lunch menu reflects Elements' signature farm-to-future philosophy, blending Mediterranean inspiration with Caribbean flair and a strong focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The menu rotates regularly to keep things interesting. Guests who prefer to order outside the set menu are also welcome to explore the full à la carte lunch menu.

"Nos a kier a duna e comunidad



empresarial di Aruba un motibo real pa laga ofisina durante ora di almuerzo," asina Nicolas Nemaiceff, Director di Food & Beverage na Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, a bisa. "Elements ta ofrece algo raro: un espacio tranquil y bunita unda un conversacion por respira di berdad. Bon cuminda, un bista excelente y sin distraccion. E combinacion aki ta dificil di supera."

"We wanted to give Aruba's business community a real reason to leave the office at lunchtime,"

said Nicolas Nemaiceff, Food & Beverage Director at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort. "Elements offers something rare: a quiet, beautiful space where a conversation can actually breathe. Good food, a great view and no distractions. That combination is hard to beat."

Reservations are recommended and can be made at elements-aruba.com, by emailing elements@bucuti.com, or by calling +297 583 1100 ext. 109. Please note that Elements is cashless. □



Aruba to me

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Snakes of Aruba

BOA
(*Boa constrictor*)



CASCABEL
(*Crotalus unicolor*)



SANTANERO
(*Leptodeira bakeri*)



Arikok National Park is home to various unique plant and animal species such as Aruba's rare endemic rattlesnake *Crotalus unicolor*). This rattlesnake is locally known as the 'Cascabel'. But Aruba has two more snake species living on the island: the Santanero and the Boa.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light



brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. It is best to leave this snake alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it.

Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattlesnakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol.

Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.

Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head

and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. This snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans. However, the venom can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not harm this species.

Boa (*Boa constrictor*)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. New-born Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous. The most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly is white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly. Boas are a non-native species. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. □

Adriaan Laclé: One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century



(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the main roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his heyday he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it



has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as the townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

Source: *De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)* by Evert Bongers.

Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what

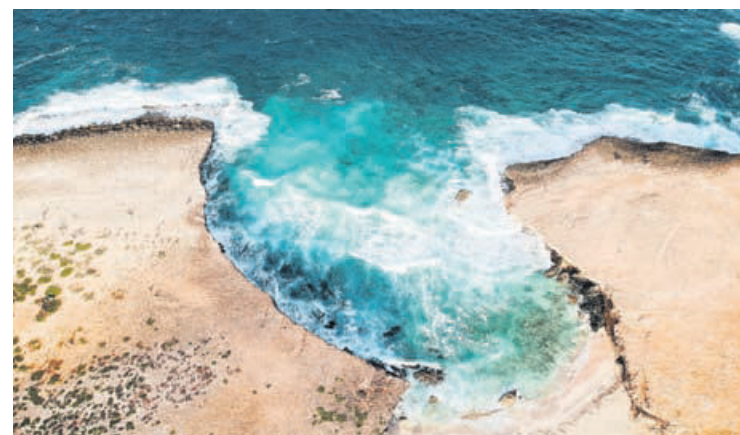
they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you." "Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south,

we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the is-



land, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can be laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique

passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiri-ki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

Source: *Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua)* by Adolf (Dufi) Kock.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 38 Danger

1 Comic 39 City
Kaplan on the

5 Twosome Rhône

9 Monopoly 40 Risqué
buy

10 Joust 41 Russian
wear denial

12 Grill waste **DOWN**

13 "Robinson
Crusoe" 1 Leave
writer the

14 Housetop 2 Not out
laborer

16 Mamie's 3 Com-
husband plaints

17 Avenue 4 Different
trees

18 Had its 5 Small
premiere tablet

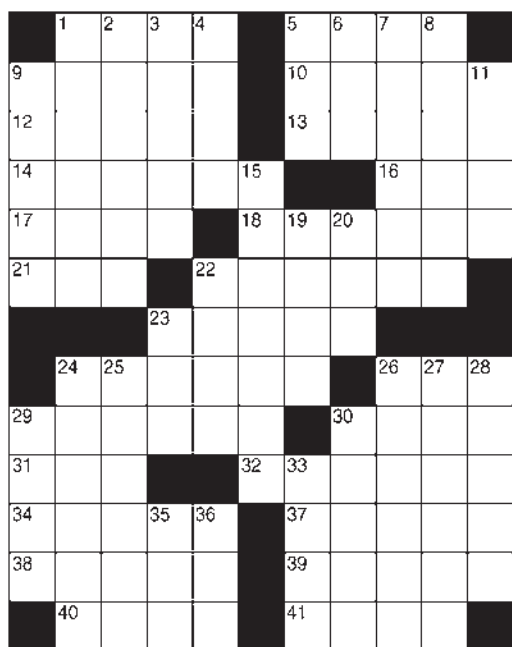
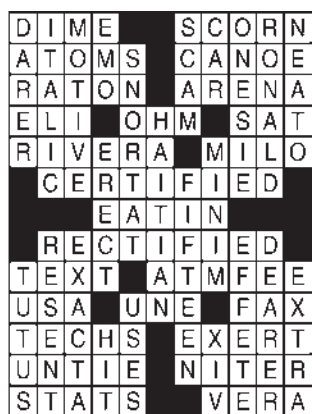
21 Bartender 6 "Roses
on "The — red"

22 Shutter 7 "It's just a
part scratch"

23 Social 8 Michael of
class "Guard-

24 Shows 9 Women's
surprise, quarters
for 11 Clarinet
example 27 Egg
26 Stroller dish
user 28 Grows
29 Bald spot weary
cover 29 Snare
30 Prefix with 30 Trite
sphere 33 Yemen
31 Curtain neighbor
holder 35 Karaoke
32 Boarding- singer's
house tenant need
34 Molecule 36 Willy
makeup

37 Syrup choice



5-8

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-8 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

P F G T A U H S L T K N K F P Z T H

B F R D G L T P F B H S P T J L F R P J

Z R H H S U J X T S X S P A V T H W T U P

V F B T H. — K J N J J X O T D F R

Cryptoquote: THERE ARE FEW HOURS IN LIFE MORE AGREEABLE THAN THE HOUR DEDICATED TO THE CEREMONY KNOWN AS AFTERNOON TEA. — HENRY JAMES

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the

store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as

the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

20 MON	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2 Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 20:00 Berth: C
21 TUE	CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C OASIS OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
22 WED	CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B SERENADE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
28 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★

4/21

Answer to previous puzzle

8	9	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
4	6	7	9	5	2	3	1	8
1	3	5	6	8	7	2	4	9
2	4	1	8	7	5	9	3	6
3	7	9	2	1	6	5	8	4
6	5	8	3	4	9	1	2	7
5	1	6	4	2	8	7	9	3
7	2	4	5	9	3	8	6	1
9	8	3	7	6	1	4	5	2

Difficulty: ★

4/20

Branded pop-up events take center stage at Coachella

Indio, United States

With a multitude of promotional events almost as long and diverse as its artist lineup, Coachella, one of the biggest music festivals in the world, is now an amusement park for influencers and a gold mine for brands.

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, or simply Coachella, has become the tone-setter for the US festival circuit.

Tickets for this edition now in its second weekend with pop stars Sabrina Carpenter, Justin Bieber and reggaeton artist Karol G at the top of the bill sold out last year within four days of going on sale.

With that, organizers were expecting around 250,000 people to come over two weekends at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, where dozens of special events with fashion, beauty, beverage, and lifestyle brands were spread out among the festival's nine stages.

"I love how big it's gotten. I love how more people are open to it," 24-year-old Luz Maura told AFP at an e.l.f. Beauty station.

The pastel-colored space offered lip glosses as souvenirs, slushies to ease the high desert temperatures, makeup artists to touch up glittery festival looks, and hosted multiple selfie corners.

The "e.l.f.scape to Balm Desert" campaign drew a "six-figure audience," said Patrick O'Keefe, the company's vice president of integrated marketing, to AFP.

Promoting a moisturizing lip balm was not just about seizing on the arid, dry desert's climate it was also backed by sales data.

"We know that 92 percent of daily makeup users incorporate lip products into their routines," he added.

Its donut-shaped chairs and branded mirrors also serve as irresistible selfie backdrops that in turn promote the brand.



Festival-goers line up to get inside the activation booth of US social media service Pinterest during the 2026 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at Empire Polo Club on April 10, 2026 in Indio, California.

- 'Analog experience' -

At the festival that's sometimes dubbed the "influencer olympics," Pinterest chose to swim against the tide with a "phone-free" installation.

Amid the debate over digital fatigue, "we made a willing decision to sacrifice that sort of immediate coverage in order to tell a story about what we believe in and who we are, and our hope is that, you know, long term that sinks in," Sara Pollack, the company's vice president and global head of consumer marketing, told AFP.

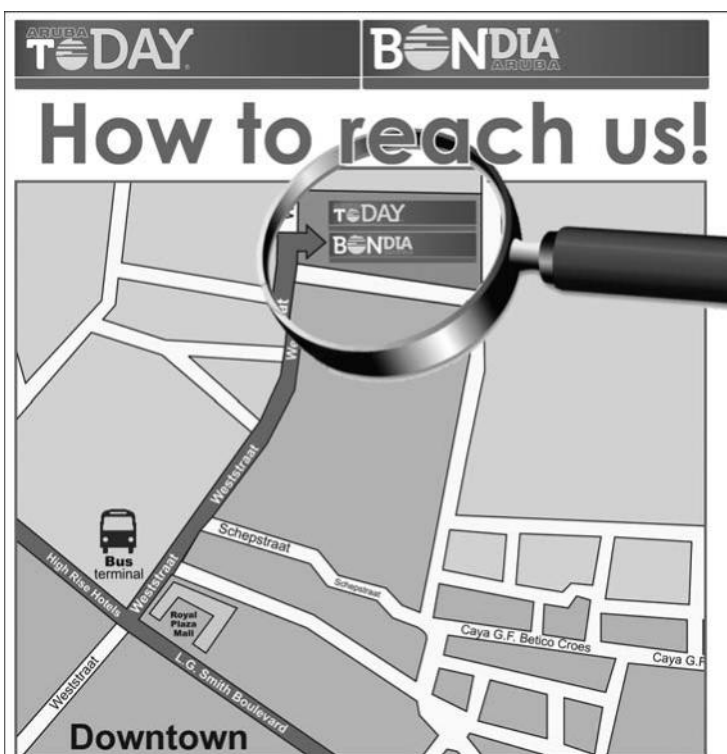
With their phones locked away in a pouch, visitors to the Pinterest space had to

resist the urge to feed their social networks with images of the colorful bar for designing custom accessories or the makeup room. For California resident Liz Mendoza, the "analog experience" was "a lot of fun."

"Especially in an environment like this where social media is such a big thing and you want to take pictures and post as much as you can, I think it's super nice to have a few minutes off of your phone and just be in the moment," Mendoza added.

Pollack maintained that Coachella, where they are taking part for a third year,

"is a great place for us to connect with Gen Z, and Gen Z is our fastest growing demographic." She noted that 50 percent of Pinterest's audience was Gen Z. □



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Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
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Editors
Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figueroa
Oriana Geerman

Sales
Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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Against Domestic Violence(FCVR) Tel. 583 5400	Centre for Diabetes Tel. 524 8888
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Anthropic says will put AI risks 'on the table' with Mythos model

Paris, France

American AI developer Anthropic plans to "lay the risks out on the table" even as it restricts deployment of a new model dubbed Mythos, whose powerful cybersecurity capabilities raise stark questions for companies and governments.

"We have a model that's beginning to outstrip human capabilities in the cyber world," Anthropic's Paris-based chief of relations with startups and tech firms Guillaume Princen told AFP in an interview.

Mythos is "capable of spotting security holes that have existed for decades, in systems tested by both human experts and automated tools, that have never been discovered before," he added.

Anthropic has delayed a general release of Mythos, sharing it first with a few dozen key American tech and financial services players -- such as Nvidia, Amazon, Apple and JP Morgan Chase -- to allow them to test and improve their security infrastructure.

But the company has also been accused of overhyping the powers of a technology which is its stock in trade -- and the subject of



AI developer Anthropic's Head of Startups, Digital Natives and Mid-Market Guillaume Princen poses during a photo session in Paris on April 16, 2026.

fierce competition with rival OpenAI.

The Mythos news broke as rumours grow that Anthropic will list on the stock market this year.

- Safety first? -

"We prefer to be transparent and lay these risks out on the table," Princen said, adding that AI safety concerns are "central to Anthropic's DNA".

"We don't have all the answers, this has to be a con-

versation between tech actors like us who have the data, the academic world, the political world and the world of economists," he added.

Mythos' reported capabilities have unsettled the American financial sector and the European Union, which requested more information from Anthropic. In an open letter to businesses, the British government said that Mythos "highlights the speed at

which AI capabilities are increasing and the threats they potentially pose".

No European company is part of Anthropic's "Project Glasswing" consortium for shoring up cyber defences using Mythos' findings.

That has raised questions about how prepared the rest of the world will be for the offensive capabilities of US-owned AI.

Mythos is "certainly not a model that will soon be opened to the public at

large, for obvious reasons," Princen said.

Anthropic is nevertheless "thinking about the next waves of opening up," he added.

- European growth -

Europe is the region where Anthropic sees the fastest growth.

Its Claude Code software development tool generates around \$2.5 billion in annualised revenue -- a figure based on extrapolating from a few recent weeks of sales.

Much of that expansion comes from "European firms riding the wave" of AI, Princen said.

The company has opened offices in Dublin, London, Paris and Munich, and wants to keep investing across the continent.

"We go where the demand is," Princen said, pointing to partnerships with European firms like Swedish coding startup Lovable or Danish pharma company Novo Nordisk.

Relatively unknown to the wider public until recently, Anthropic was founded in 2021 by former OpenAI staff and makes around 80 percent of its revenue from business-to-business sales. □

Outrage in China after streaming site debuts AI actor 'database'

Beijing, China

China's equivalent of Netflix, iQIYI, faced backlash on Monday over a new initiative that facilitates the use of actors' likenesses in artificially generated dramas and films.

More than 100 celebrities have joined a platform to connect with makers of AI-generated content interested in using their image, a senior executive told a conference in Beijing.

China's entertainment

industry has rapidly embraced the use of artificial intelligence, with AI-generated films and shows a common feature on video platforms.

A slate of Chinese actors took to social media to declare they had not or would not sign up to the "artist database", with fans decrying iQIYI's apparent move to reduce work for human actors.

The streaming site called the backlash a "misunderstanding" and insisted actors would retain control over how their image was used in AI-generated content.

"We are not currently licensing the likeness of actors," iQIYI Senior Vice President Liu Wenfeng told AFP.

"Rather, we are enabling

AI creators and actors to more quickly establish connections through Nadou Pro," he said, referring to the company's new AI tool targeted at filmmakers.

Users can input prompts into Nadou Pro to generate short films and use it for editing, according to a live demonstration on Monday.

"There's a misunderstanding here," Liu said. "What kind of drama, which shot everything needs to be confirmed by the actor."

Fans were also angered by comments made by iQIYI chief executive Gong Yu suggesting fully human-made work could become "intangible cultural heritage" a phrase used in Chinese to describe a relic of the past worth preserving. The phrase "iQIYI

went nuts" was the most-discussed topic on social media platform Weibo by mid-day.

"If actors all turn into AI, what warmth will these works of literature and art have?" read one post.

Experts warn there are risks involved in allowing AI to use a person's image.

"Once an artist's image data is used for training platform models, there are technical risks such as model fine-tuning, data leakage and unauthorised secondary training, which are difficult to eliminate," Li Zhenwu, a lawyer from Shanghai Star Law Firm, told AFP.

"This means that an artist's digital assets may be reused...completely outside of their control," Li added. □



A TV screen shows a demonstration of Nadou pro, iQIYI's AI product for professional film and television production, during the iQIYI World Conference in Beijing on April 20, 2026.

French Open sensation Boisson returns to action after 'most difficult' spell

Madrid, Spain

Lois Boisson, the French player who lit up Roland Garros last year with her stunning run to the French Open semi-finals, told AFP she cannot wait to return to action on Tuesday at the Madrid Open after months out injured.

Ranked 361st in the world before the 2025 edition of Roland Garros, Boisson created a sensation by reaching the last four of the Grand Slam tournament, beating top 10 players Jessica Pegula and Mirra Andreeva in the process.

The 22-year-old backed up her maiden major appearance by winning a first tour-level title on clay in Hamburg in July and breaking into the world's top 50, but has subsequently been plagued by injuries.

"The last few months have been very difficult the most difficult since I started playing tennis," Boisson said. "I didn't handle them very well mentally, let's say."

The world number 46, however, added that she had "learnt some lessons" from



France's Lois Boisson returns the ball to Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic during their women's singles first round tennis match on day three of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City, on August 26, 2025.

her period on the sidelines, which "will help me in the future".

"I'm convinced I have what it takes to achieve great things in tennis," she insisted.

"I'm happy today to have come out of it stronger and to have come to terms with it all a bit."

- 'So many false starts' -

Boisson has not played

competitively since September, when she withdrew from the third round of the WTA 1000 event in Beijing, due to a series of injuries and, what she labelled, "medical mistakes". She added that the extra attention following her exploits at her home Grand Slam may have contributed to the stresses on her body.

"Perhaps without realising

it, it added a kind of stress, a sense of pressure something I simply wasn't used to dealing with all that attention surrounding me," she said.

Untimely leg niggles then an arm injury halted Boisson's star just when it appeared to be firmly on the rise.

"The two minor injuries I had to my leg weren't serious," she explained. "It

was mainly this arm injury that was unexpected, to be honest, and difficult to manage.

"There were quite a few mistakes on the medical side. Each time, I was given timings that weren't realistic... That's also why there were so many false starts", such as at last week's WTA event in Rouen from which Boisson withdrew shortly before the start of the tournament.

But now Boisson is back, and she will be playing on her favoured surface, clay, at the Madrid Open, which runs from Tuesday to May 3. "There's a really good vibe here," Boisson said.

"Being back on the circuit, at a tournament, I feel it's giving me something I haven't had for a while. It's also helping me to continue with this process of healing."

Boisson opens her debut campaign in the Spanish capital with a round-of-128 meeting with American 43rd-ranked player Peyton Stearns. □

Formula One makes rule changes after drivers' criticism

Paris, France

Formula One chiefs unanimously agreed on Monday to make rule changes following severe criticism of new regulations introduced this season which led to doubts over Max Verstappen continuing in the sport.

The new rules made cars a combination of combustion and electrical power, meaning drivers had to carefully manage their battery, effectively slowing down on a qualifying lap, while the cars had boost buttons to allow them to overtake.

Four-time world champion Verstappen called the new style of racing "a joke" after the Chinese Grand Prix and hinted he would take a break from F1 in 2027 unless changes were made.

Other drivers had criticised

the new rules and fans said the changes had detracted from the experience of spectators.

Following an online meeting between F1, its governing body FIA, and the sport's team principals, tweaks to the rules have been finalised and are set to come in for the Miami Grand Prix on May 3.

That race will end the season's enforced five-week break following the cancellation of the Bahrain and Saudi Arabia races due to the conflict in the Middle East.

Among the changes, energy harvesting which helps the driver charge the battery will be reduced from eight megajoules to seven and the hybrid power unit will be increased from 250kw to 350kw.

The changes are designed to allow the drivers to go

at full speed for longer in qualifying.

Another change has been made to the boost button, after British driver Ollie Bearman's high-speed crash at the last round in Japan, which was attributed partly to the difference in closing speeds.

The boost button will now be capped at 150kw, "limiting sudden performance differentials", the FIA said in a statement.

Further talks are set to take place after the Miami Grand Prix.

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff cautioned against sweeping changes to the rulebook, after his drivers Kimi Antonelli and George Russell made a fast start to the season. Antonelli leads Russell by nine points in the standings after the first three races. Speaking before the meet-

ing, Wolff said: "The discussions that have been taking place between the drivers, the FIA, Formula One, and the teams have been constructive. And we all share the same objectives."

"It's how can we improve the product, make it out-and-out racing, and look at what can improve in

terms of safety, but act with a scalpel and not with a baseball bat.

"We are going to ratify, in order to evolve, because there has only been three races. We need to learn from the past, where decisions were sometimes made in an erratic way, and then we overshot and realised it wasn't good. □



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen leaves after a pit stop during the Formula One Japanese Grand Prix at the Suzuka circuit in Suzuka, Mie prefecture on March 29, 2026.



Kenyan long-distance runners John Korir and Sharon Lokedi pose with the trophy after finishing first in the men's and women's divisions during the 130th Boston Marathon on April 20, 2026, in Boston, Massachusetts.

Kenyan double-double as Korir, Lokedi defend Boston Marathon crowns

Boston, United States

Defending champions John Korir and Sharon Lokedi completed a Kenyan double-double at the Boston Marathon on Monday, both delivering tactical masterpieces to clinch back-to-back victories in the 130th edition of the prestigious road race. Korir took advantage of perfect racing conditions to claim the fourth marathon win of his career with a majestic performance to win the men's race in a new course record.

The 29-year-old defending champion bided his time before pulling away from Ethiopia's Milkesa Mengesha after 20 miles to finish in a time of 2hr 1min 52sec. Korir's winning time obliterated the previous course record of 2hr 03min 02sec set by Geoffrey Mutai in 2011.

Tanzania's world champion Alphonse Simbu finished second in 2hr 02min 47sec, sprinting past Kenya's Benson Kipruto down the closing straight. Korir's second Boston victory follows his wins at the Chicago Marathon in 2024 and the Valencia Marathon in December.

Korir's serene victory was in stark contrast to last year's Boston win, when the Kenyan fell during the early stages of the race before recovering to clinch a memorable win.

"This year was a breeze for me because I had no problems at the start or at the finish," Korir said afterwards. "It felt like a race back home with all the people cheering. It was in my mind to set the course record and I thank God that he fulfilled my wishes."

- 'Patient' Lokedi dominates -

Korir's emphatic win in the men's race was emulated by Lokedi in the women's elite event, who took the tape in 2hr 18min 51sec. The 32-year-old collected the third major marathon victory of her career after emerging from a crowded pack of around a dozen runners over the final six miles.

Lokedi broke clear after 21.7 miles with compatriots Loice Chemnung and Irine Cheptai alongside her, and then kicked again to lead by eight seconds from Chemnung at the 23-mile mark.

Lokedi showed no sign of flagging over the final few

miles and led by 33 seconds heading into the final mile before kicking for home to complete a third major marathon win after victories in New York in 2022 and Boston in 2025.

Chemnung finished 44 seconds behind in second place, with Mary Ngugi-Cooper third in 2hr 20min 07sec.

Lokedi said patience had been the key to her victory and revealed that encouragement from a young fan had helped spur her finish. "It just felt so good I just kept telling myself 'Be patient, be humble, you can do this'," Lokedi said.

"And then I saw a little girl who said 'You got this ladies!'. And it was so cute, and that was what I needed."

Lokedi also said her friend and compatriot Hellen Obiri a Boston winner in 2023 and 2024 and runner-up behind Lokedi in 2025 who missed Monday's race had also offered support.

"I really wish I had (Hellen) there, but she texted me yesterday and said 'I know you can do it, I believe in you just go out there and show them who you are'," Lokedi said. □

Wembanyama 'changing the game as we speak', says Nowitzki



Victor Wembanyama #1 of the San Antonio Spurs looks at the clock during the closing minutes of the second half of Game One of the Western Conference First Round NBA Playoffs against the Portland Trailblazers at Frost Bank Center on April 19, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas.

Berlin, Germany

German basketball legend Dirk Nowitzki said Victor Wembanyama, who won on his play-off debut on Sunday, was "changing the game as we speak". In an interview with AFP on Tuesday ahead of his induction into the FIBA Hall of Fame, Nowitzki said he was stunned by the impact the 22-year-old France player was having on the game.

"I mean, he's changing the game as we speak. I've never seen anything like it," the 2007 NBA MVP said. "His defense is so good that he changes the game just by being on the court and taking away some of the layups and twos that other teams would usually take."

Wembanyama scored 35 points, the most on a playoff debut in franchise history, to go with five rebounds and two blocks as his San Antonio Spurs beat the Portland Trail Blazers in round one of the playoffs.

Playing just his third NBA season, the forward/centre is in the running for MVP and Defensive Player of the Year honours.

The 2011 NBA champion said Wembanyama had the other-worldly ability help the young Spurs overcome their lack of experience.

"They're definitely ready. They're definitely there. Of course, the one question about the Spurs is 'are they experienced enough?'"

"But I think Wemby is kind of that x-factor that takes that away. He levels that whole experience thing out." Nowitzki, 47, said the Spurs could get past defending champions Oklahoma City Thunder and reigning MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander.

Should the Spurs get past Portland and either the Denver Nuggets or the Minnesota Timberwolves in the next round, they are on track to meet the Thunder in the Western Conference Finals.

"They'll definitely think that they can. They're a tough matchup for OKC."

"We've seen that. They beat them like three times around Christmas."

"They have all the guards and can attack them. So I don't know if it's a year or two too early. We shall see. "It's going to be a fun playoff run. So they're definitely knocking on the door."

A skillful European big man who could shoot, Nowitzki was a pioneer for players like Wembanyama, but said he had plenty to learn from the young Frenchman. □